

Michael F. Easley  
Governor



## State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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### **GOV. EASLEY CONTINUES CONSERVATION DIRECTIVE IN 17 WESTERN COUNTIES**

**RALEIGH** - Gov. Mike Easley said today he is continuing his directive for state agencies in 17 western counties to conserve water. Seventeen western counties that were in either extreme or severe drought last week are still in those categories. Easley also said people across the state still need to conserve water as we head into the heat of summer.

"The rain that came through North Carolina from what remained of Tropical Storm Barry was a welcome relief for much of the state," said Easley. "But that rain only kept things from getting worse in the Piedmont and coastal areas and did not help the western part of the state at all."

Rain last weekend and overnight Monday helped conditions in the areas east of Interstate 95 and north of I-85, but the mountain and foothill regions received little precipitation. The governor's directive to state agencies to stop all non-essential water use in 17 western counties is still in effect, and he has asked all citizens to voluntarily reduce their water consumption by at least 10 percent. The 17 western counties are Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania and Yancey.

Today's update from the U.S. Drought Monitor reports 57 of North Carolina's 100 counties are still experiencing either moderate, severe or extreme drought, down from 83 counties last week. There are five levels of drought (abnormally dry, moderate, severe, extreme and exceptional) which are measured based on stream flows as well as lake, reservoir and ground water levels. Forty counties are considered to be in a moderate drought and 36 counties are abnormally dry.

The drought has prompted 16 public water systems in North Carolina to issue voluntary water conservation restrictions and another seven water systems to issue mandatory water restrictions. The water systems that have issued mandatory water conservation are in New Hanover, Union, Johnston, and Chatham counties.

The drought is expected to worsen in the coming week because meteorologists expect much of North Carolina to experience dry weather and steamy temperatures in the 90s. For more information, go to [www.ncdrought.org](http://www.ncdrought.org). State agencies that need guidance on water conservation measures should go to [www.sustainablenc.org/neguidance.htm](http://www.sustainablenc.org/neguidance.htm).

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